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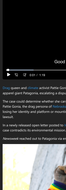
Inside the $1 legal battle between Patagonia and drag queen Pattie Gonia

Story by Gabe Whisnant · 7hr · 17 min read



Drag queen and activist Pattie Gonia said Wednesday she will fight a $1 trademark lawsuit filed by outdoor apparel giant Patagonia escalating a dispute over her name and environmental work.

The case could determine whether she can continue using her name and operating her advocacy and business. Pattie Gonia, the drag persona of Marine biologist Mark Wiley, said she now faces a choice between "standing up" for identity and platform or recovering a legal defense, urging supporters to pressure Patagonia to drop the lawsuit.

In a newly released court letter posted to Instagram, Wiley appealed directly to the company's leadership, arguing the case contradicts its environmental mission.

Newsweek reached out to Patagonia via e-mail for comment.

Drag queen and activist Pattie Gonia (Mark Wiley) and Mckenzie Arnett (left) at a protest against Alaska Governor Jeanette James Dunleavy's support of Pebble Mine.

Patagonia Appeals to Patagonia's Leadership and Values

Addressing CEO Ryan Gellert, the board of directors and the company, Patagonia Trust, Pattie Gonia opened by praising Patagonia as an "exceptional company" with a long-standing commitment to environmental protection. She described the brand as "inseparable" from her own work, saying it has been foundational to her personal growth, including a community of more than 6 million people and millions of dollars raised for environmental causes.

She argued that lawsuit, filed in January in federal court in California, threatens to dismantle that work.

"After 5 years, online word-of-mouth company until you're public because [sic] decided that I must cease to exist," she wrote, describing the case as harmful not only to her but also to "the people I employ, the millions of people I try to inspire, and dozens of nonprofit organizations that I have helped."

The letter frames her advocacy as extending beyond performance into fundraising, environmental education and organizing across its outdoors, arguing that losing the "Pattie Gonia" name would effectively erase the foundation of that work.

An LGBTQ+ march sign in front of a Patagonia store in Boston, photographed on June 10, 2018.

Lawsuit Raises Stakes Beyond Nominal Damages

Patagonia has defended its lawsuit as a necessary step to protect its long-standing trademark, arguing it cannot selectively enforce its brand based on whether it agrees with a person's cause. In a public statement, the company said it "will continue to support Pattie Gonia's work" and that it remains "committed to being proud of the cause it's been supporting for more than 50 years and fighting for environmental issues."

The company has also stressed that letting its unit create exceptions to ability to enforce its trademarks in other cases, potentially opening the door to misuse by other entities. Although Patagonia is seeking only $1 in damages, the company alleges that Pattie Gonia's name, merchandise and activities overlap with its trademarked brand and could confuse consumers.

"We're not against any creative expression, or commentary about our brand," Patagonia said in a January statement. "We want Pattie Gonia to succeed. We support her career and make progress on issues that matter — but it's a way that doesn't infringe on our trademarks."

In her letter, Pattie Gonia emphasized the practical consequences of the case, warning it could "grind me down to the point I can't continue to operate," citing potentially $1 million in legal costs and loss of her ability to act as an activist brand. She said Patagonia, founded in 1973 in Ventura, California, by climber and environmentalist Yvon Chouinard, filed the lawsuit "without warning, no opportunity for a pause when she described as an "amicable settlement" over the past four months.

"I have remained hopeful the beginning that there is room for an agreement that protects your trademark while letting me honor my values and my craft," she wrote, adding that she will hopes for a resolution outside of court.

Instagram embed will be rendered here

Activist Frames Dispute as Clash Over Mission

Pattie Gonia rose to prominence in 2018 after posting videos of herself hiking in full drag, quickly building a large social media following with content that blends humor, performance and climate advocacy. Her videos—often filmed on mountains and trails—have reached millions of viewers, helping to grow an online audience of more than 2.5 million across platforms and establishing her as a prominent voice in environmental and LGBTQ+ activism.

Through that platform, she has organized hikes and community events, co-founded the nonprofit Outdoorist Club to expand access to the outdoors, and raised millions of dollars for environmental and inclusion-focused causes.

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Striking a more personal tone in her letter, Pattie Gonia argued that the legal fight diverts resources from environmental priorities.

"Our home planet needs every dollar and every moment of time we can all give to it right now," she wrote. "We can't afford to waste time and fighting among ourselves."

She also invoked Patagonia's storied purpose, challenging whether the lawsuit aligns with its mission to "save the home we live in." Addressing Gellert directly, she wrote: "You are not who you say you are," suggesting the case contradicts the company's values.

Pattie Gonia closed with a direct appeal for de-escalation, urging Patagonia's leadership to intervene.

"This lawsuit serves no good purpose," she wrote. "Let's make peace and get back to our common love of the planet. I ask you to intervene and drop this lawsuit here."

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Rock star's wife says 14-year marriage is 'done' after singer comes out as 'proudly gay man'

Story by Jenn McKnight · 14hr · 17 min read

photo of Gabe Saporta singing on the mic

Fleur Sharma has confirmed that her 14-year marriage to rock star **Gabe Saporta** is "done" after the singer came out as a "proudly gay man" on Saturday, May 23.

The Beartooth frontman, 32, admitted he spent years struggling with his sexuality, but felt "compelled to set the record straight" to avoid hurting "those I love very furthers."

Hours later, Fleur, who married Gabe in April 2012, released her own statement on Instagram, revealing that while she fully loves and supports Gabe, the past few months have been a "hurtful time to navigate."

"Not really sure how to start this cause does anything even need to be said? But I guess I'll just dive right in," she began.

Fleur Sharma's message to her after Gabe Saporta came out as gay

"The past few months have been a very disorientating and hurtful time to navigate. For both of us. But I will always support Gabe and I support Gabe. I have cared more about his well being over the years than anything else in the world."

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"To see the confusion and pain he went through and the highs and lows and wanting to help but not knowing how. You never want anything more for your person than for them to just be ok. You also ask yourself constantly if you're a bad person for wondering will this mean for your world & the anger you also have."

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Nancy Guthrie, Sheriff Chris Nanos hit with $25 million lawsuit

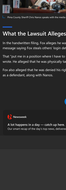
Story by Khaleda Rahman · 11hr · 17 min read

Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos, who is leading the investigation into the disappearance of Nancy Guthrie, has been hit with a $25 million lawsuit by an Arizona woman who alleges he was "branded like a dog."

Nicole Kenneth Cox, who is incarcerated in Pima County, filed the lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona on May 27. She is suing Nanos, Deputy Jeffrey Rodriguez, and Pima County, alleging excessive force and the two denied medical care by officers in the jail, leaving him with lasting severe damage from a spider bite.

The lawsuit is the latest blow for Nanos, who has repeatedly come under fire while leading the investigation into Guthrie's disappearance, which remains unsolved after more than three months.

A spokesperson for the Pima County Sheriff's Department declined to comment, citing pending litigation.



Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos speaks with the media on February 3 in Tucson, Arizona.

What the Lawsuit Alleges

In the handwritten filing, Cox alleges he was left with black eyes and had to fight for his life after an officer posted a message saying Cox owes others "sign debasis, pieces ads and violence."

That "put me in a position where I have to fight for my life in the morning, giving me a serious threat to safety," he wrote. He alleged that he was physically targeted as a result, leaving him "in pain for weeks."

Cox also alleged that he was denied his right to medical aid. The lawsuit lists prison health care provider HealthCare as a defendant, along with Nanos.

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Gretchen Carlson gobsmacked after DOJ launches probe of Trump assault victim

Story by Adam Lynch · 4hr · 17 min read

Former Fox News host Gretchen Carlson (ReCrate Composite)
Getty Images/Fox News

President Donald Trump's DOJ has Justice Department has launched a criminal investigation into E. Jean Carroll, the former magazine columnist who accused Trump of sexual assault, but former Fox host Gretchen Carlson said she was left waiting for the DOJ to do so last week.

The DOJ's investigation is focused on whether Carroll committed perjury in testimony tied to hermes civil lawsuits against the president — she alleged he sexually abused her in a New York department store in the mid-1990s, and a second for defaming her when in 2019 he repeatedly denied the assault after he was convicted by a jury of its peers.

Hearst Senior Data Analyst Aileen and Columnist Philip Bump called the probe "dubious" on a CNN panel and suspected it would be quickly thrown out for "vindictive prosecution" if pursued.

"We read this like it's a real case because it's the Department of Justice. … But there's no reason for us to assume the justice department is acting in good faith. And that's what's always cavalcade of weakness in the United States."

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